



Professional Staff Congress

Contract Bulletin

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Competing Visions of CUNY

PSC Blueprint for Renewal

Over the course of three summer negotiating sessions and at a meeting on September 30, the Professional Staff Congress and the representatives of the CUNY Chancellor exchanged demands for our new contract. The PSC negotiating team is committed to bargaining in good faith: we are listening seriously to management's detailed presentation of their demands—and forcefully arguing our own. Think of the victories in the last contract: salary increases for all; research time for untenured faculty; paid office hours for adjuncts; a professional development grant program for Higher Education Officers and College Laboratory Technicians; library cards for retirees and other benefits. We intend to make similar advances this time, but at this stage all the momentum for progress is on our side.

The PSC presented a blueprint for continuing the renewal of the University and of our own professional lives: increased salaries in every title, added support for welfare fund benefits, reasonable teaching loads, fair pay and benefits for part-timers, more support for research, and true professional autonomy at every level. We know that a thriving university is intellectually alive throughout—and that the delicate, complicated work of teaching and learning requires deep support.

CUNY management, on the other hand, described its aim in bargaining as increasing “productivity, accountability and flexibility”—a mantra that doesn't belong in factory negotiations and certainly doesn't belong at a university. We find the Administration's demands devoid of ideas; all the proposals for rebuilding come from the union. The bargaining agenda offered by the Chancellor's Office includes demands for a wide range of givebacks and concessions, and emphasizes managerial control at the expense of professional autonomy. In addition, management's demands are silent on many basic issues that would create a livable life: there are no proposals to enhance family leave or improve sabbaticals or reduce class size or improve workplace safety or provide for childcare.

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Management's proposal is to base CUNY on the idea of authority.”

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Universities have been described as places based on the authority of ideas. Management's proposal is to base CUNY on the idea of authority.

It's ironic that just as University management is celebrating increased enrollment and describing a general resurgence at CUNY, their representatives at the bargaining table are presenting proposals that would impose a punitive, intellectually stifling regime. Years of research on complex organizations reveal that top-down control seldom produces the desired result. This is the time to invest in supporting the people who make CUNY work, not to impose conditions that will inhibit teaching and learning.

This round of negotiations may well involve us in an effort to preserve the fundamental nature of a university at CUNY. One principle at stake is whether a university that serves a racially diverse and often disadvantaged population should enjoy the intellectual and professional autonomy that has been the hallmark of university education. Why should anything less be good enough for CUNY?

Of course, we are at the very beginning of negotiations. The PSC negotiating team is confident that we can make the negotiations an arena for advancing our vision of the University, as we did in the last round of bargaining. We will use the sessions to press vigorously for each one of our demands—and to defend the gains the PSC has won over many years. To do that successfully, we'll need your support. The first step is to become informed about what we're proposing and how it compares to the proposals offered by 80th Street.

On the next pages is a comparison of representative proposals from union and management. Management's proposals will be available on our website, www.psc-cuny.org. We urge you to read the demands carefully, compare them with the union's demands (already on our website) and become part of an informed, active membership.



Their Vision and Ours: First Round of Demands

Issue	PSC	CUNY Management
Union protection	Ensure that all appropriate employees are included in the union and given full union protection.	Deprive many PSC members, including department chairs, of their right to be in the union.
Salary	Raise salaries across the board, at every level and rank.	Eliminate the current step system; grant raises within salary ranges only at discretion of the college presidents.
Workload	<p>Increase reassigned time for research; decrease teaching load at senior and community colleges.</p> <p>End abuse of 35-hour week for HEOs.</p>	<p>End annual leave for full-time faculty on August 15.</p> <p>Increase workload for lecturers at EOCs and counselors at Hunter Campus Schools.</p>
Welfare Fund, Health Insurance	<p>Substantially increase contributions to Welfare Fund. Provide health insurance to graduate employees. Cover adjuncts under City health insurance plan. Expand eligibility for coverage for Continuing Ed.</p>	<p>No proposals for expanded health insurance coverage.</p> <p>Proposal to issue a report on organization of the Welfare Fund.</p>
Quality of Life	<p>Increase parental leave. Provide on-campus childcare. Expand tuition waivers for employee families and for adjuncts. Fully fund sabbaticals.</p>	No proposals.
Class Size	Respect authority of departments to set size limits; compensate faculty whose classes exceed departmental limits.	No proposals.

Please Turn

Their Vision and Ours: First Round of Demands, Continued

Issue	PSC	CUNY Management
Pay Equity for Adjuncts	Pay part-time instructional staff on the basis of parity with comparable full-time titles.	No proposal, except at EOCs—to freeze current adjunct pay rates.
Professional Staff	Increase promotional opportunities for HEOs and CLTs.	Allow HEOs to be reassigned and reclassified to lower titles.
Library and Counseling Faculty	Provide library and counseling faculty with the same annual leave as other full-time faculty. Include this faculty in 12-hour reassigned time benefit.	Reduce annual leave for registrars and library and counseling faculty.
Job Security & Seniority	Develop seniority and job security systems for adjuncts. Allow HEOs to achieve job security more quickly.	No proposals for adjunct seniority or security. Reduce protections for HEOs against being fired.
Labor/Management Relations	Recognize management's duty to negotiate with the union about changes in the terms and conditions of employment.	Increase management's ability to act unilaterally.
Grievance Procedure & Due Process	Impose penalties for management stalling on grievances. Protect employees' due process rights in disciplinary proceedings.	Grant incentives for management stalling on grievances. Abridge employees' due process rights in disciplinary proceedings.
Safety and Health	Ensure that heating and ventilation meets accepted professional standards; allow appropriate campus employees to halt construction if conditions are hazardous.	No proposals.
Union Activity	Expand reassigned time available for members to be active in enforcing the contract.	Reduce the reassigned time available to the union for grievances and contract enforcement.